

# Alexandre Farto aka Vhils

## *Dissonance*

**Private View:** Thursday 26th March, 6-9pm

**Exhibition runs:** 27th March - 23rd April 2015



Lazarides is proud to present a new body of multidisciplinary work by Portuguese artist Alexandre Farto aka Vhils. *Dissonance* showcases an ultimate culmination of ideas initiated and developed in the artist's last two solo exhibitions in 2014: *Dissection*, held at Lisbon's EDP Museum and Vestiges, showcased in Paris. Farto's highly anticipated return to London follows *Devoid*, his last major showcase held at Lazarides Rathbone in 2012.

*Dissonance* explores notions of increased saturation and dilution of personal identities in contemporary urban societies, reflecting the uniformity and abstraction brought about by the current model of globalised development. This collection speaks of how individuals are shaped into increasingly abstract personalities by the overpowering force of the city and its visual stimuli, becoming lost to the dissonance that results from the chaos engendered by technology, visual communication and mass media, by public space and urban development. The upcoming exhibition is a complex reflection on how various factors compose the contemporary urbanised world that is shaping us into what we are, personal identities becoming more and more abstract, lost to the visual noise and clutter that surrounds us.

The striking new series of work is rooted in the idea of dismemberment and dissection, in conducting an almost clinical examination into the results of living with a chronic sense of dissolution. The stratification encompassed in the contrasting media presented, compositions in metal, wood, and billboards, each highlight the effacement of identity through the way in which the encroaching layers surround and take over the subjects being portrayed. Similar themes are expressed in the styrofoam dioramas that illustrate the process of reciprocal shaping that lies at the heart of the relationship between the city and its inhabitants. *Dissonance* presents a powerful response to contemporary culture and rapid urban regeneration through the eyes of one of Europe's most distinctive visual artists.

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“I first saw Alex’s work back in 2007 and was totally floored. Here was this crazy Portuguese kid, doing these mad portraits on the street by chopping out bits of walls. It was one of the most innovative techniques I’d ever seen. It has been a pleasure to see how much he has come on from those early days to his most recent museum show in Lisbon. Long may it continue.” – Steve Lazarides

#### **About Alexandre Farto aka Vhils**

Portuguese artist Alexandre Farto (1987) has been interacting visually with the urban environment under the name of Vhils since his days as a prolific graffiti writer in the early 2000s. Farto’s groundbreaking carving technique – which formed the basis of his *Scratching the Surface* series and was first presented to the public at the VSP group show in Lisbon in 2007 and London’s Cans Festival in 2008 – has been hailed as one of the most compelling approaches to art created in the street in the last decade.

Alexandre Farto grew up in Seixal, an industrialised suburb across the river from Lisbon that was heavily influenced by the transformations brought on by the intensive urban development during the 1980s and 1990s. An avid experimentalist, he has been developing his notion of the aesthetics of vandalism in a plurality of media – from stencil painting to wall carving, from pyrotechnic explosions to 3D modelling.

This striking form of visual poetry, showcased around the world in both indoor and outdoor settings, has been described as brutal and complex, yet imbued with a simplicity that speaks to the core of human emotions. Farto’s work expresses the struggle between aspirations of the individual and the demanding, saturated environment of the urban spaces he lives in. The mixed media work highlights and exposes the sombre dimension that lies behind the current model of development and the material aspirations it encompasses – unsustainable, yet inebriating.

Notable solo exhibitions include: *Dissection*, EDP Museum, Lisbon (2014), *Vestiges*, Galerie Magda Danysz, Paris (2014), *Dissolve*, Skalitzers Gallery, Sydney (2013), *Fragmentos*, Clark Art Center, Rio de Janeiro (2013), *Devoid*, Lazarides Rathbone, London (2012), *Visceral*, 18th Gallery, Shanghai (2012).

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